

# Wisconsin workers lead the way

## 'Kill the bill, not our unions'

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Madison, Wis.

The people's liberation of the state Capitol in Madison, Wis., is in full swing.

Speaking to a massive rally on Feb. 19, Mahlon Mitchell of the Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin said, "Now is the time. We can't let this die because we are at ground zero and what happens here affects the rest of the world. We have to be strong. A united front." Mitchell in January became the first African-American president of the PFW.

This was the biggest demonstration yet, with an estimated crowd of 100,000. It filled the grounds outside the state Capitol while a sit-in continued inside. A massive roving picket line with all sectors of the working class — union and non-union workers, the unemployed, students, people of color, immigrants, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community — marched on the streets for the entire day, accompanied by drumming, chanting, dancing and singing.

The racist, anti-worker Tea Party hosted a counter-rally on the Capitol steps in the early afternoon. It drew about 2,000, protected by more than 500 fully armed cops with riot gear. Tea Party members were bused in and left quickly after their rally.

The right-wingers were completely surrounded by the pro-union crowd. Some workers even waded into the Tea Party crowd and shouted at the main speakers.

Students and workers from Students for a Democratic Society, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together, Bail Out the People Movement, Veterans for Peace, Freedom Road Socialist Organization and Workers World Party directly confronted the Tea Party with chants of, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, racist Tea Party has to go," "Hands off workers: Make the banks pay" and "Kill the bill."

Gov. Scott Walker's "budget repair" bill would eliminate collective bargaining rights for 175,000 public sector union workers statewide. Since Feb. 14 tens of thousands have been occupying the state Capitol to block passage of this legislation, which is an attack on the entire working class

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## WWP salutes heroic sit-in

By Sharon Black  
Madison, Wis.

Feb. 22 — Workers World Party salutes the workers of Wisconsin who through their sacrifice and fortitude are showing the way for workers everywhere!

The occupation of the Wisconsin Capitol is in its eighth day. The Wisconsin South Central Labor Council has voted to endorse a general strike of its members if Gov. Scott Walker passes the budget bill that contains provisions that would destroy collective bargaining for public sector unions.

It was the energy of the students and teachers that served as the spark that lit these amazing developments in Wisconsin. These have ramifications for not only public and private sector workers and their unions but ultimately all of the working class, young and old, jobless and working of all nationalities.

Make no mistake, the pivotal issue is union-busting, but in essence what has been unleashed is the pent-up desire of the masses of people to push back against the right-wing onslaught and what has been characterized so well on signs here: "The war on the workers."

An unprecedented 100,000 people marched in Madison on Feb. 19 in

contrast to a small group of Tea Party supporters who drew less than 2,000 people. Over the weekend, local papers trumpeted that snow and bad weather would decimate protests but instead workers took their marches to the inside of the Capitol.

Inside the Capitol, solidarity is growing. Firefighters have slept alongside high school and college students. Our own reporters are sharing the floor with other seasoned trade unionists who have been in the trenches fighting labor battles.

Holding and occupying the Capitol has been a key component in this critical labor battle. And so far the fortitude of the students and workers to continue has remained strong.

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Inside, outside Madison Capitol.

WW PHOTOS: SHARON BLACK; BRYAN G. PFEIFER

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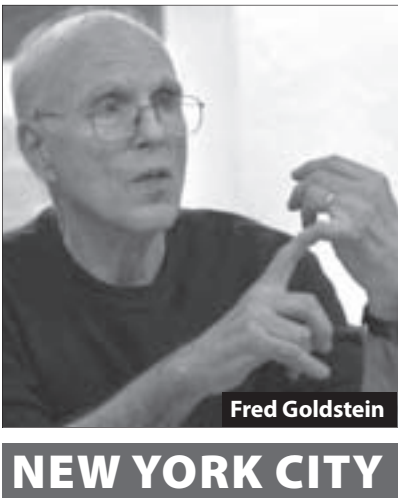
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WW PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN AND JOHN CATALINOTTO

# Left Forum to attract record level of panels & speakers

By Dee Knight

The annual Left Forum in New York City is expected to attract hundreds of panel speakers and thousands of attendees, more than were scheduled in earlier years. This year’s forum will take place March 18-20 at Pace University near City Hall.

Titled “Toward a Politics of Solidarity,” the Forum will include participants from across North America and around the world. A broad spectrum of left groups from this country and abroad are participating.

The panels for the largest single U.S. event where socialist ideas are discussed were planned before the tumultuous events in Egypt and Tunisia and currently sweeping North Africa and Southwest Asia, as well as before domestic resistance to austerity programs — like that in Wisconsin. Participants will undoubtedly adjust their discussions to take these events into account.

It will be interesting to see if a new layer of activists, stimulated by these massive movements, come looking for a socialist perspective.

## Panel on ‘Gaza: Symbol of Resistance’

Two panels will be of special interest to Workers World readers and supporters. “Breaking the Siege on Gaza: How Solidarity Is Overcoming State Terror” will serve as an introduction to the new book, “Gaza: Symbol of Resistance.” This book’s contributing editor Joyce Chediac will be joined by Charles Barron of the Freedom Party, who participated in the 2009 Viva Palestina caravan, and Bill Doares of Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition, who was a key organizer of that caravan. Chediac has contributed to WW coverage of the revolt in Egypt.

“Breaking the Siege of Gaza” will focus on the resistance inside Gaza and the massive solidarity movement it inspired — especially the Viva Palestina Caravans from both Europe and North America, which in turn stimulated a virtually permanent caravan of continuous support for Gaza. The panel will also look at the brutal Israeli attack on the Turkish aid flotilla which killed nine people on the Mavi Marmara ship, which became a global turning point unmasking Israel’s self-defense posture and intensifying pressure to end the siege of Gaza.

Joyce Chediac witnessed the first Palestinian Intifada in 1988 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. She also traveled to Libya in 1987 following the U.S. bombing of that country, and in 2009 she visited Lebanon to observe conditions of Palestinian refugees and the reconstruction of Lebanon. She writes on events in the Arab world for WW.

Doares was New York City coordinator of the Viva Palestina USA-Lifeline II convoy that brought medical aid to Gaza in July 2009. He works with the International Action Center and Al-Awda NY, The Palestine Right to Return Coalition. Most recently, he was coordinator of the Sept. 11, 2010, Emergency Mobilization Against Racism and Anti-Islamic Bigotry, which defended the Islamic community center in lower Manhattan.

## Panel on Jobless Recovery and Prospects for Fightback

In another panel, “Jobless Recovery, the Intractability of the Capitalist Crisis, and Prospects for Fightback,” Brenda Stokely of the Million Worker March Movement and Gary Labao of BAYAN USA will share the podium with Fred Goldstein, author of “Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay.” Goldstein is a contributing editor to Workers World newspaper. They will dissect the “jobless recovery,” with its “austerity” programs, budget cuts, wholesale attacks on unions, and increasing anti-immigrant bashing and repression.

The panelists will discuss how to defend workers’ immediate interests and past gains, while also fighting for a real solution: socialism. They will discuss how this perspective can be woven into the struggles of undocumented and other immigrant workers; the growing movement of students and public workers against “austerity” programs and budget cuts; and international solidarity and transnational labor organizing.

Brenda Stokely is co-founder of the Million Worker March Movement and former president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 215 in New York City. A leader and board member of the Katrina-Rita Survivors Network, Stokely also served as chairperson of the Freedom Party’s program committee.

Gary Labao is a founding member of BAYAN USA and, until recently, served as its political education officer. BAYAN USA defends the rights and welfare of Filipinos in the U.S., and coordinates solidarity and support for national liberation and democracy in the Philippines.

Among the many other panels, two stand out. One is “The Betrayal of Haiti,” with Kim Ives, editor of Haiti Liberté; union organizer Ray Laforest; and Roger Leduc of KAKOLA: the Haitian Coalition to Support the Struggle. The other is “U.S. Imperialist Wars, Political Prisoners, Past and Present, and the Anti-War Struggle.” Featured speakers include Pam Africa and Suzanne Ross of the Free Mumia Coalition and Ralph Poynter of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee.

More information is available at [www.leftforum.org](http://www.leftforum.org).

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## Stop attack on poor, working women

# Defend Title X family planning funding!

By Sue Davis

Will cutting \$283 million from the federal budget help solve the \$1.4 trillion deficit?

Hardly.

However, that's what the Republicans in the House of Representatives would have the public believe. They have put Title X, the National Family Planning Program, which cost \$283 million in 2007, on the chopping block in the 2011 federal budget as a key component of their austerity plan.

Does that make fiscal sense? Not if you consider that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls family planning one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century. Not only has it helped advance the social and economic status of women while preventing unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, and decreasing infant, child and maternal deaths.

But Title X, which President Richard Nixon signed in 1970 as part of progressive legislation inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, has also saved taxpayers billions of dollars ever since!

Title X serves 5 million poor women, 70 percent of whose income is below the poverty line. These women are disproportionately women of color — 20 percent are Black and 28 percent are Latina. That makes this attack both sexist and racist.

But there's more. Cutting Title X will affect women at every stage of life. It will eliminate funding for prenatal care, nutrition programs for pregnant women and their children, and Head Start and child-care for 368,000 children. It will cut the Women's Educational Equity Program, which helps schools comply with Title IX (sports equality), Pell grants for college students and Social Security support for elderly women.

Chopping Title X is not about deficit reduction — just as denying collective bargaining rights for public sector workers in Wisconsin and other states isn't. Destroying Title X is about advancing the right wing's thoroughly racist, anti-woman and anti-children, anti-reproductive rights, anti-poor, anti-working class agenda.

It is a narrow-minded, heartless, life-threatening, discriminatory, totally reactionary assault on poor and working

women. It is profoundly anti-life for all working and oppressed people.

### Attack on Planned Parenthood

The House took that even further on Feb. 18, when it passed the "Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition" amendment by 240 to 185, which eliminates all funding for Planned Parenthood, the largest private provider of health care services for women in the U.S.

Though more than 90 percent of Planned Parenthood's health care services for 3 million women were preventive in 2010 and the organization has received no federal funding for abortion since 1976, amendment sponsor Rep.

Mike Pence (R-Ind.) called it a "victory for life" because he doesn't want taxpayers' money to be used to "subsidize the largest abortion provider in [North] America."

Is defunding Planned Parenthood a victory for women?

Not if Planned Parenthood will no longer be able to serve 1.4 million Medicaid patients who use its health centers as their primary preventive health care provider. Not if Planned Parenthood will have to

curtail family planning and many types of reproductive and other health services for millions of women.

It's only a victory for Pence, other reactionary legislators and right-wing Tea Party demagogues like Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin, who, in pursuit of "small government" and "pro-life" hypocrisy, seek to destroy all legislation that benefits poor and working people and their families.

In response, many women's and legal groups and the "liberal" flank of the Democratic Party are rallying to defend Title X and Planned Parenthood. The National Organization for Women, the Feminist Majority, the National Women's Law Center, the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood have all flooded supporters with educational e-mails and petitions.

Planned Parenthood of New York City has called a Stand Up for Women's Health Rally on Feb. 26 at Foley Square at 1 p.m.

*Statistics came from the National Organization for Women, the National Women's Law Center and Planned Parenthood e-mails sent out the week of Feb. 14.*

## Bronx rally

# Defends jobs of Woodlawn Cemetery workers

By Dee Knight  
Bronx, N.Y.

A strong rally of union and community activists converged on Woodlawn Cemetery's entrance in the northwest Bronx on Presidents' Day, Feb. 21, to show solidarity with the workers there. They brought a message for management: "You will not get 'contractors' through these gates!"

The rally moved to nearby Woodlawn Heights, where the recently hired union-busting consultant Mitch Rose lives. Cemetery bosses are preparing a deal with a notorious low-paying contractor, who exploits immigrant workers, to replace unionized workers.

A vice president at Woodlawn, Rose has accompanied management's lawyer to the negotiating table with the workers. Marchers let Rose know he should look for a different job.

While the crowd stood in front of Rose's home, singers from the Bail Out the People Movement — Heather, Jen, Dinae and Aya — sang a moving and original song about the Woodlawn workers, the legendary Band of Brothers, and Teamsters Local 808, which represents them.

Ramon Jimenez of the South Bronx Community Congress and the Freedom Party urged people to come to an action-planning meeting at Hostos College on March 5. "We need to forge a student-labor-community alliance to win at Woodlawn and stop [New York Gov. Andrew] Cuomo and [New York City Mayor Michael] Bloomberg's attacks on all city workers," he said.

Rick Coss, a leader of the Band of Brothers and Teamsters Local 808 steward at Woodlawn, told Workers World, "The winds of Cairo have blown to Wisconsin and the winds in Wisconsin are blowing to Ohio, heading to New York. Here things are building so that wind will be a tornado!"

Coss added, "We honor Black History month, and Malcolm X, who was martyred on this day. Malcolm said there's going to be a class struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors, between the working class and the ruling class. It's not going to be based on color but on class. Bloomberg, Cuomo and [President Barack] Obama are going to have to face such a tornado."

The rally was led by Local 808 leader Chris Silvera, together with Jimenez. Teamsters represented included Locals 111, 202, 210, 804, 805, 807, 814, 831 and 1205, as well as 808. Local 805 President Sandy Pope told Workers World that these locals cover numerous sectors, including warehouse workers, United Parcel Service drivers, MetroNorth Railroad employees, among others.

Present were members of the carpenters union, District Council 37 Local 374, representing workers at New York Botanical Gardens; District 32BJ-Schools Division; and Service Employees union District 1199-Health Division. Members of Amalgamated Transport Workers Local 1181, Transport Workers Union Local 100; and David Virella, president of TWU Local 501 were there. They were joined by the United Federation of Teachers, New York State United Teachers and the Professional Staff Congress/American Federation of Teachers at City University of New York.

A special delegation came from UNITE HERE Local 100. These cafeteria workers at Bronx Community College face summary layoffs on March 1, when manage-



WW PHOTO: MICHAEL OTTO

'Band of Sisters'(backs to camera) sing in solidarity with cemetery workers.

ment plans to bring in a contractor who uses minimum-wage workers. Their situation is much like that of the Woodlawn workers.

Workers World spoke with members of the local, who are planning a March 1 rally to force management to cancel plans to replace them. Silvera called them to speak to the crowd and said their struggle is one with that of the Woodlawn workers.

Community groups present included the South Bronx Community Congress, the Freedom Party, Church of the Resurrection, New Day United Methodist Church and Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. Also represented were the Bronx Green Party, Bail Out the People Movement, May 1 Coalition for Workers' and Immigrants' Rights, Million Worker March Movement, Women's Fightback Network and Workers World Party.

Among immigrant rights groups was Mujeres por la Paz (Women for Peace), who had visited the Woodlawn gravesite of suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton on Feb. 12. This "Band of Sisters" used the occasion to demand a union contract and no layoffs for the Woodlawn workers.

### Campaign to target Woodlawn Trustees

Rocio Silverio of the Bail Out the People Movement told the rally, "The Woodlawn Board of Trustees is charged with protecting the integrity and public image of Woodlawn."

Silverio described plans to pressure the trustees. "This will give the workers a shot in the arm," she said, noting that Woodlawn management has tried to divide the workers. Targeted trustees include Ricardo Fernandez, president of Lehman College; Mercedes Ellington, granddaughter of legendary Duke Ellington, who is buried at Woodlawn; and Ruth Abrams, a founder of the Tenement Museum, who appears to have a commitment to people's rights.

"I don't know what her commitment is to immigrants and workers today who are facing the same dilemma as those earlier immigrants, but we want to ask about that," Silverio emphasized.

To send letters to Mitch Rose on behalf of the Woodlawn workers, write to him at 345 E. 236th St., 2nd floor, Bronx, NY 10470. □



## Before March 24 sentencing

# Actions to demand justice for Newburgh Four

By Dolores Cox

In October 2010 four impoverished African-American men from the town of Newburgh, N.Y., were convicted of terrorism charges. They are James Cromite, David Williams IV, Onta Williams and Laguerre Paven. One is a diagnosed schizophrenic. They are known as the Newburgh Four.

The men are scheduled to be sentenced to federal prison on March 24. They face possible life sentences. Their case is another blatant example of FBI entrapment and preempted prosecution.

The Newburgh Four were lured and convinced to consider engaging in terrorist activity and criminal acts by a government agent who offered them cash and cars. The agent provocateur, who has a criminal background, is reported to have been paid almost \$100,000 by the FBI to initiate, direct, supply, fund and facilitate every detail of the plot. The same FBI informant has acted in other entrapment cases in upstate New York.

Despite the fact that the court has ac-

knowledgeed defendants’ lack of connections to any terrorist group — after their arrests the FBI search of their homes found no literature, videos or other materials reflecting terrorist ideologies, training or proclivities — the court has not entertained defense lawyers’ motions to dismiss the convictions based on government misconduct and mishandling of evidence.

Civil rights activists and other protesters will come together for a series of actions in the upcoming weeks to draw attention to the Newburgh Four case. February 26 has been declared “A Day of Action for the Newburgh Four.” Simultaneous events in support of the defendants will take place in New York City from 1-3 p.m. in Brooklyn at Borough Hall, in Manhattan at Union Square Park and in Harlem at the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building.

“Say No! to targeting of communities of color in the ‘war on terror.’ Stand up against FBI entrapment!”

For more information on the case, go to Campaign to End the Death Penalty ([www.nodeathpenalty.org](http://www.nodeathpenalty.org)). □

## MUNDO OBRERO

# Decenas de miles liberan al Capitolio estatal en Madison

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red de comunicación, desde páginas web, correo electrónico, Twitter, YouTube, mensajes de texto, redes telefónicas y otras están esparciendo la noticia sobre la resistencia y exhortando a la gente a que vaya al Capitolio.

Consignas como “Maten el proyecto de ley”, “No se metan con los trabajadores, que paguen los bancos”, “¿Quién tiene el poder?: Nosotros tenemos el poder” y muchos otros están haciendo eco dentro y fuera de las paredes del Capitolio.

Declaraciones y resoluciones de apoyo para los/as trabajadores y estudiantes de Wisconsin están llegando desde todo el país. El Consejo Sindical de San Francisco, la Coalición Primero de Mayo de Tucson, United Electrical Workers Local 150, los Trabajadores Negros por la Justicia, el Congreso de la Comunidad del Sur del Bronx, Comité de Emergencia de Michigan Contra la Guerra y la Injusticia, Estudiantes por una Sociedad Democrática, ¡Luchemos contra el Imperialismo, Unámonos; la Coalición Moratoria AHORA para Acabar con las Ejecuciones Hipotecarias, los Desalojos y Cierres de Utilidades; y decenas de otros sindicatos, organizaciones estudiantiles y comunitarias se han comprometido a apoyar.

Una declaración del Movimiento Pro Rescate del Pueblo (BOPM) del 14 de febrero dice: “Lo que quieren los ricos y poderosos es quitarnos nuestros derechos y convertir a todos/as los/as trabajadores/as en esclavos/as virtuales, tanto en el sector público como en el privado. Se está utilizando la llamada crisis del déficit como un pretexto para atacar a los/as trabajadores/as de todos los sectores, privado ó público. ¡Decimos no! Obliguen a los bancos a utilizar el dinero que se están guardando. ¡Impónganles impuestos a ellos y a los ricos! Tomen los billones de dólares malgastados en la guerra y apoyando dictaduras y úsenlo para el pueblo. Debemos decirle al gobernador Scott

Walker: ¡No se metan con los/as trabajadores/as públicos o haremos lo que la juventud y el pueblo de Egipto hizo! Vengan a acampar al Capitolio de Wisconsin hasta que ellos escuchen! Asumiremos el legado del Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. y marcharemos, ocuparemos lugares estratégicos y enlazaremos nuestros brazos con los de nuestras hermanas y hermanos hasta que logremos justicia”. ([www.bailoutpeople.org](http://www.bailoutpeople.org)).

Para actualizaciones y más información, vea [www.wseu-sepac.org](http://www.wseu-sepac.org), [www.wisafclcio.org](http://www.wisafclcio.org) y [www.weac.org /Home.aspx](http://www.weac.org/Home.aspx).

*Bryan G. Pfeifer es un ex residente de Wisconsin y actualmente es el organizador del Sindicato de Facultad a Tiempo Parcial - AFT Local 477 en la Universidad Wayne State en Detroit, Michigan.*

## WWP salutes heroic sit-in

*Continued from page 1*

the massive protests, including the support of unions and workers nationally, have created a euphoric atmosphere that has given hope to everyone who has supported the workers, including immigrant rights groups.

Local residents have opened their homes to those occupying the Capitol offering hot showers. Pizza has been ordered and paid for by supporters in Cairo, Egypt. Everywhere you go in Madison, there is support from non-unionized, low-paid clerks to the homeless in the street.

The first duty of every revolutionary, every progressive minded person, everyone who wants to put an end to this rotten system of capitalism, with its destruction of people’s rights, with its repression, with its virulent racism, sexism, anti-lesbian, gay, bi and trans bigotry is to give complete and unabashed support to this critical labor battle.

Long live the workers of Wisconsin and their fight for justice! □



PHOTO: WILLIAM HUGHES

Protest against racist attack in Baltimore.

# Community activists protest at courthouse

By Steven Ceci  
Baltimore

In the morning of Feb. 16 about 30 people came out to protest at the court hearing of two brothers who brutally attacked a 15-year-old African American student on Nov. 19, 2010, as he was walking from school to his grandmother’s house. The two brothers, Avi and Eliyahu Werdesheim, are members of a Zionist vigilante group called Shomrim. When they were patrolling the neighborhood and came across the student, they told him he didn’t belong in that neighborhood and proceeded to beat him up.

Adding insult to injury, newly elected Baltimore City State’s Attorney Gregg Bernstein reduced felony charges against the two brothers to minor misdemeanors. This insulting lowering of charges has led many people in the Black community to

call for Bernstein’s resignation.

The protest was lively, with participants loudly chanting “No justice, no peace!,” “What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!” and “Hey hey, ho ho, Gregg Bernstein has got to go!” The organizers of the protest are demanding the Shomrim be disbanded; full prosecution of the two brothers, including hate crime charges; and resources for neighborhoods that have too long been neglected.

The protest was called by the All Peoples Congress, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Baltimore Chapter, the Baltimore Black Think Tank, and longtime community activist Leo Burroughs. Students from Morgan State University and Baltimore City Community College participated in the protest and affirmed that they will participate and organize more students to come out for the trial date of May 2. □

# Wisconsin workers lead

*Continued from page 1*

and oppressed by the banks, corporations and the Pentagon. Their pressure caused Democratic legislators to leave the state, thus delaying a vote and giving the workers more time to organize the massive protests.

John Carey, a member of Veterans for Peace from Madison, told this writer, “We feel we have a purpose here because the economy is being affected by the wars. We oppose war as being a way of settling differences between nations, so we fit into this activity because our economy is being destroyed by the war and that is affecting the unions and working people. I think that if the administration is incapable of coming to a reasonable decision, namely not to destroy collective bargaining, then the unions should force regaining and maintaining their collective bargaining. They have a right to that and it can never be taken away.”

## Widespread union, student participation

Beginning Feb. 15 the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, American Federation of Teachers-Wisconsin, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and other unions began bus-ing in thousands of members from across the state and beyond. Delegations of union members, students and community groups came from across the country and even from Toronto.

Emergency support demonstrations by the Bail Out the People Movement began Feb.18 at the Stock Exchange on Wall Street and have continued across the world.

Walker and state legislators have been flooded with emails, phone calls, tweets and thousands of visits to their offices. Virtually all the major unions have frequent updates on their websites. Facebook is ablaze with up-to-the-minute messages. Twitter updates are constant. Demonstrators utilize numerous other communication strategies, including a live stream from inside the Capitol.

During the past week union members and their allies picketed the homes of Walker and other right-wing, racist politicians, held protests throughout the state, sponsored candlelight vigils and more. These and many other actions are ongoing.

Lynne Pfeifer, an AFSCME Local 1288 member who has worked at the Manitowoc County Health and Rehabilitation Center for more than 30 years, told this writer: “We can’t have it. We can’t lose collective bargaining. The rally at the state Capitol was fabulous. There were people all over, on the lawn, on the sidewalks, around the Capitol, all different ages. I got into the Capitol and that was another display. If those legislators didn’t hear what they ought to do, they’re not paying attention. They have to make some change.”

On Feb. 18, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka spoke at a major noon-time rally and the Rev. Jesse Jackson Jr. spoke at an evening rally on the Capitol steps. Both expressed their solidarity and pledged to help kill the Walker bill. Rev. Jackson also put forward a people’s program demanding a moratorium on foreclosures, relief for student loan debt, and a federal jobs program, among other issues. He also pledged solidarity with the lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer community.



## From a youth organizer in Madison

# ‘Solidarity of workers & students cannot be broken’

By Ben Carroll  
Madison, Wis.

Feb. 21 — Inside the state Capitol building in Madison, Wis., the halls normally filled with politicians and corporate lobbyists are now occupied by thousands of people. Banners and posters with messages of solidarity and slogans denouncing Gov. Scott Walker’s attack on the public sector workers hang from every wall.

Chants of “power to the people” and drumming fill the building from the early hours of the morning until late at night. The energy in the building is absolutely electric and all who are participating in the occupation and mass demonstrations are determined to carry the struggle forward until the anti-union bill is defeated.

Young people and students are playing a decisive role in the historic struggle that is developing in Wisconsin. The occupation — which is entering its second week now — has been led by young workers, high school students, undergraduates and the graduate student unions.

Students have developed food distribution centers, information points, medical teams and infrastructure. A people’s assembly was held to make collective decisions about how to keep and build the people’s control of the Capitol building. The struggle has been a tremendous teacher, in helping to shape and guide the development of the occupation.

Every day that the struggle moves forward, more and more young people are

flooding Madison to stand with workers against the right wing’s attack on the public sector. This struggle has lit a fire in the hearts and minds of young people and awakened a spirit of resistance. So many young people that filled the halls of the Capitol, or have been marching in the streets shoulder to shoulder with workers, have remarked how this type of militant action has been long overdue and that they are determined to keep fighting until these right-wing attacks are defeated.

### Solidarity of workers and students cannot be broken

Tens of thousands of students from all over Wisconsin, and indeed from all over the Midwest, have mobilized to participate in the many rallies and demonstrations that have been organized during the past week to help hold the occupation at the Capitol building. High school students in Madison organized walkouts and mile-long marches from their high schools to join their teachers down at the Capitol.

Student organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society, Student Labor Action Coalition, Voces de la Frontera and the United Council, among others, have been helping to mobilize students to the Capitol and build solidarity for public sector workers. They’ve organized walkouts at a number of University of Wisconsin campuses, including more than 3,000 students at UW-Madison, organized by SDS. The graduate student unions maintain an organizing center in the Capitol

building that runs around the clock, and student organizations help to staff and organize out of it. Students also helped to lead a demonstration against the Tea Party on Feb. 19 that drew out 100,000 trade unionists and students.

On a day this writer spent doing outreach at UW-Madison’s campus, there was near universal support for the workers and students fighting back against these attacks. Almost everyone we spoke with had been participating in the ongoing demonstrations and declared their intentions to return. In an instant, this struggle has opened up the political consciousness of so many young people and has given life to an urgency to fight back.

### Struggle about more than this one bill

While the primary task at hand is to kill the ‘budget repair’ bill, which would eliminate collective bargaining, the grievances of young people extend far beyond that. In many ways, this bill was the tipping point that drove so many young people into the streets. Outraged by the injustices and inhumanities of this capitalist system, they have had enough.

So many remarked that what is happening now in Madison is exactly the kind of fightback that working people have need-



ed to face the onslaught of attacks against the public sector that have occurred since 2007, the beginning of the current capitalist crisis. It was clear to all how this bill is the latest in a series of attacks on workers and students — from the attacks on public education to the millions of workers who are unemployed with no end in sight; the lack of health care for so many; foreclosures; and the list goes on.

Many people pointed out how the banks are sitting on trillions of dollars and how the U.S. continues to spend billions on wars, occupations and bailouts, yet Walker and every other state government around the country claims that cuts are necessary. It is the capitalist system, so many occupying the Capitol said, that is the real problem. Many here say we need a revolutionary transformation of society that puts people’s needs first, and not profit.

Young workers and students are determined to keep the Capitol occupied and in the hands of the people. They are continuing to work around the clock to defend the occupation from any police provocations, and to build it and bring more young people in to help hold the building. This is viewed as one of the most urgent tasks for young people at the moment.

The fighting spirit and the solidarity of workers and students in Wisconsin should serve as a great inspiration and example to all those fighting the attacks on the public sector and on all workers.

*The writer is an organizer with the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group in Raleigh, N.C.*

## the way ‘Kill the bill, not our unions’

### Inside the occupied Capitol

Students of all nationalities were the spark behind occupying the Capitol. It began with a rally at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on Feb. 14, followed by a march and then the sit-in. Students soon took over and held the Rotunda, keeping up a spirited atmosphere with chanting, drumming, dancing and coordinated speak-outs all hours of the day and night. The students increased their presence after Madison teachers called in sick and the entire K-12 public school system was shut down. It has remained closed since Feb. 15.

On Feb. 18 Milwaukee public schools shut down. Many students from that district joined their teachers at the Capitol. Dozens of school districts in Wisconsin have either shut down entirely or been slowed down by teacher sick-outs. After threats of retaliatory action against some teachers, doctors began signing excuse slips at the Capitol on Feb. 19.

Inside the Capitol, slogans such as “What’s disgusting: union busting” echo off the Rotunda walls. Food and beverages are being distributed by students and workers. Donations are being given directly or called into local restaurants so food can be delivered.

Students and workers have been sleeping overnight at the Capitol since early in the week. A communications room is in operation and medical workers are assisting. The bonds of unity and solidarity keep spirits up and promote a deep sense of camaraderie.

Signs such as “Egypt? Wisconsin?” convey the inspiration Wisconsin protest-



WW PHOTOS:  
SHARON BLACK  
AND BRYAN G.  
PFEIFER

ers got from the Egyptian people. Spirits are bolstered by artwork from other international struggles and signs from activists in the U.S. Large sheets of paper with colorful artwork are taped to the walls, and notable signs include “Zapata lives” and “Sí se puede.” Also visible are solidarity messages from Argentina, Mexico, Texas, Detroit, Baltimore, Boston, San Francisco, Raleigh, N.C., and others.

“I think it’s great to see the crowds just building and building. We need to fight against this bill — it’s terrible. It was our fathers and mothers who built this, now it’s a whole younger generation, and it’s just wonderful to see,” Babette Grunow of Milwaukee told this writer.

On Feb. 17 University of Wisconsin students walked out statewide. At UW-Milwaukee, the second-largest campus in the state university system, more than 3,000 students filled the main plaza for a rally sponsored by SDS and supported by the UWM Education Rights Campaign.

Gilbert Johnson, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, told this reporter: “We’re repulsed by the efforts of the current administration to strip us of our rights and dignity. The increasing protests statewide, and especially at the state Capitol, are exactly what’s needed to kill Gov. Walker’s bill, which is a union-busting and anti-worker attack. The resistance by the people of Wisconsin is inspiring and instilling hope in poor and working people all over the country. We need a constant stream of people going to the Capitol to stop this bill.”

Walker’s budget bill was stalled in the Joint Finance Committee after a people’s filibuster of more than 20 hours on Feb. 15-16.

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO says that 20,000 descended on the Capitol Feb. 15 and 50,000 the next day. Delegations of firefighters joined the protests in a notable act of solidarity, as they are exempt from the dire effects of Walker’s bill. They received an electric response from the crowds, as have the youth and students.



### Support from labor & community groups

Statements and resolutions of support for Wisconsin workers and students have come in from across the country. The San Francisco Labor Council, the Tucson May 1st Coalition, United Electrical Workers Local 150, Black Workers for Justice, South Bronx Community Congress, Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, Students for a Democratic Society, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together, Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, and scores of other unions, student and community organizations have pledged support.

*Bryan G. Pfeifer, a former Wisconsin resident, is presently staff organizer with the Union of Part-Time Faculty-AFT Local 477 at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich.*



# Message from Cairo to Madison

Some of the Egyptians who participated in the uprising there have been supportive of the workers’ struggle in Madison, Wisc., as can be seen in the photo here. Other have donated funds to buy pizzas in Madison and have them sent to the workers and students at the state Capitol.

Another example comes from CTUWS, an umbrella advocacy organization for independent unions in Egypt. The CTUWS suffered repeated harassment and attacks by the Mubarak regime and played a role in its overthrow. Kamal Abbas is general coordinator of the CTUWS and had been arrested and threatened numerous times by the Mubarak dictatorship.

In a message to the people occupying the Capitol, Abbas said: “I speak to you from a place close to Tahrir Square in Cairo, heart of the Revolution in Egypt.

Here in ‘Liberation Square’ many of our youth paid with their lives and blood in the struggle for our just rights.

“We stand with you as you stood with us. No power can challenge the will of people who believe in their rights, raise their voices loud and clear, and struggle against exploitation.

“No one believed our revolution could succeed against the strongest dictatorship in the region. Yet in 18 days the revolution achieved the victory of the people. When the working class of Egypt joined the revolution on Feb. 9, the dictatorship was doomed and victory became inevitable.

“Victory always belongs to the people who stand firm and demand their just rights. Don’t waiver. Don’t give up on your rights. We and all the people of the world stand on your side and give you our full



Cairo, Egypt, has eyes on Wisconsin.

support. As our just struggle for freedom, democracy and justice succeeded, your struggle will succeed.

“Today is the day of the American workers. We salute you! Victory belongs

to all the people of the world, who are fighting against exploitation, and for their just rights.” Abbas saluted other peoples in the North African and West Asian region fighting to remove their rulers. □

## Packers athletes:

# ‘Public workers are Wisconsin’s champions’

By Monica Moorehead

*The heroic worker and student takeover of the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, which is entering its second week, has evoked solidarity throughout many sectors of U.S. society; athletes are no exception. The Green Bay Packers, the only publicly owned team in the National Football Association and winners of Super Bowl XLV, are based in the working-class city of Green Bay, Wis. Past and present Packer members — Curtis Fuller, Chris Jackie, Charles Jordan, Bob Long, Steve Okoniewski, Brady Poppinga and Jason Spitz — issued the following solidarity statement on Feb. 15, the second day of the Wisconsin Capitol takeover.*

### Football union supports Wisconsin workers

Following statement was issued on Feb. 15.

**The NFL Players Association will always support efforts protecting a worker’s right to join a union and collectively bargain. Today, the NFLPA stands in solidarity with its organized labor brothers and sisters in Wisconsin. □**

We know that it is teamwork on and off the field that makes the Packers and Wisconsin great. As a publicly-owned team we wouldn’t have been able to win the Super Bowl without the support of our fans.

It is the same dedication of our public workers every day that makes Wisconsin run. They are the teachers, nurses and child care workers who take care of us and our families. But now in an unprecedented political attack Governor Walker is trying to take away their right to have a voice and bargain at work.

The right to negotiate wages and benefits is a fundamental underpinning of our middle class. When workers join together it serves as a check on corporate power and helps ALL workers by raising community standards. Wisconsin’s long standing tradition of allowing public sector workers to have a voice on the job has worked for the state since the 1930s. It has created greater consistency in the relationship between labor and management and a shared approach to public work.

These public workers are Wisconsin’s champions every single day and we urge the Governor and the State Legislature to not take away their rights. □



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

## Two books that shed light on

# The present upsurge

By Deirdre Griswold

The uprising of Wisconsin public workers, vigorously supported by youth and students, has changed the map of class relations in the United States — and even beyond its borders. Coming after the tumultuous mass upheavals in the Arab world, it has further reminded all social classes of a fact that had seemed buried in the mists of time: that workers have the power to change society, and even run it, if they organize independently, fight militantly and are confident of their strength.

But why did it happen now? And, equally important, why hasn’t it happened before in all these years since the great organizing struggles of the 1930s? What is new in the current situation?

The current perception that this great struggle was caused by the political lineup at the state and federal level is widespread — but inadequate. The election of a Republican governor in Wisconsin — who owes his victory largely to donations from the right-wing, corporate-financed Tea Party movement — certainly adds to this perception, since it was Gov. Scott Walker’s outrageous “budget repair” initiative, with its meat-axe attack on the state’s public unions, that triggered the huge fightback.

However, budget cutting at the expense of workers, especially the savaging of social programs that have provided lifelines for the poorest and most vulnerable, is not confined to Wisconsin or to states with Republican officials. Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York is singing the same tune. So is Gov. Jerry Brown of California. Both are Democrats, as are many other budget-cutting governors and legislators.

On the federal level, President Barack Obama is not only planning to cut the fed-

eral budget, which is financed largely by income taxes on workers, but he has set up a commission that is demanding cuts to Social Security, Medicare and other so-called “entitlement” programs paid for out of separate funds, taken directly out of workers’ paychecks, that are really deferred wages.

Even the Democratic legislators who, as of this writing, have left Wisconsin in order to prevent the passage of Walker’s legislation, as well as leaders of the unions involved in that struggle, say that while they oppose this onslaught against the collective bargaining rights of state employees, they accept the need to cut the budget.

### How times have changed

This hasn’t always been true. For a long time after the huge class battles that led to the formation of the CIO during the Great Depression of the 1930s, workers seemed to be moving forward in the U.S. More workers were being organized into unions; every few years they were able to negotiate contracts that improved wages, benefits and working conditions.

The notable exception was the South, where virulent racism weakened the entire working class, and unions were virtually banned.

During that time, there were cyclical crises of capitalism when markets became glutted, production was cut back, unemployment rose, and the bosses had a stronger hand in dealing with the workers’ demands. But then the economy would recover, and most of those laid off would be rehired.

However, in that same period, the big owners of capital came out far, far ahead. Smaller companies were bought up by larger ones. Workers’ wages may have gone up some, but the bosses made out like bandits.



Wisconsin State Capitol, Feb 15.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER



## FIST statement

# Proposes national student strike: 'FIGHT LIKE A WISCONSINITE'



*The following is a statement from the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together youth organization.*

Workers and students in Wisconsin have joined together, igniting a valiant struggle against a bill designed to eliminate collective bargaining rights for public sector workers in the state. Other features of the bill that Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin has proposed are to raise health care premiums and the workers' contributions to their pensions.

Before the bill went to committee, where it would have to pass before being voted on by the legislature, thousands of workers, students and community members converged on the statehouse in Madison. Since that very first day, the numbers have grown at every protest, reaching over 100,000, while thousands of students and workers have occupied the inside of the state Capitol building.

Fifteen school districts have been shut down, including in Madison and Milwaukee. Teachers have called in sick. Students began walking out of class last week. At high schools throughout Madison, students walked out in the hundreds per school before the schools were closed down. Students in the University of Wisconsin system have called for strikes and walked out of class.

Workers and students have blocked elevators and stairwells, shouted down meetings, occupied offices and engaged in other acts to disrupt business at the Capitol, in spite of Gov. Walker's threat to call in the National Guard.

The militancy of the Wisconsin actions has inspired students and workers across the country. In response to a similar bill by the right-wing governor of Ohio, workers there have descended on the statehouse in Columbus. Dozens of solidarity actions are being held around the country and activists, unions and students, who are gearing up to fight austerity measures in almost 40 states, are watching and planning to fight back.

Like many other state governments across the country, the state of Wisconsin is crying broke. Walker has said that there is no money, and the state deficit needs to be fixed. Like many Democratic and Republican politicians, Walker, along with the corporate media, has painted public sector workers as greedy, as the haves, and private sector workers as the have nots.

In an ironic twist, the workers are being made pariahs and the cause of budget crises that are the latest manifestation



of the overall crisis of the capitalist system.

Workers in the state where collective bargaining rights for public sector workers were first won in the late 1950s are to blame, it's said, not the rich and superrich, not the bankers and financial institutions, not the hedge funds.

The reality is that the loss of revenue to the states and federal government is directly tied to the capitalist crisis, which has caused the economy to shed more than 8 million jobs. While companies have reaped record profits during the so-called recovery, jobs are scarcer than they have been for decades. Wages have gone down, and many of the available jobs are temporary.

Forty-four states are crying over deficits totaling more than \$125 billion and are seeking to severely cut back on vital services and to lay off public sector workers.

These deficits represent the IMFization of the U.S. All the while banks and financial institutions have received trillions of dollars in bailouts, and hedge funds are robbing monies for education by bankrolling the charterization and privatization of the public school

systems. Trillions go to wage war in the interest of corporations and the rich ruling elite of this country.

The rich, superrich and corporations continue to receive huge tax breaks. In Wisconsin, Gov. Walker gave tax breaks worth \$140 million to Wal-Mart. This money would more than close the \$130 million deficit that he is now claiming.

What must be done? A war has been unleashed on the workers. The rights and wages of workers are being viciously curtailed. There is no future in worrying about the profitability of corporations because profit is derived from exploitation. There is no future in workers and students worrying about the deficits of local, state or the federal government all the while that trillions are used to wage war on Third World countries to steal their resources.

Workers and students need to fight back, to mobilize and be in the streets. Fight like a Wisconsinite! Fight like an Egyptian! Fight for the wealth our labor creates! Build student and worker fightback committees to struggle for jobs, education and health care for all. Fight against racism, anti-immigrant, anti-Islam bigotry, sexism and homophobia! On to a student strike for March 31! On to May Day! All power to the workers and students!

# ge and the crisis behind it

Millionaires became billionaires. (Let's not forget, a billion is 1,000 times a million. Have even the best-paid workers' wages gone up 1,000 times?) "Mom and pop" businesses virtually disappeared, giving way to chains and superstores. As productivity vastly increased, the banks and financial institutions reigned supreme. That's where the wealth really piled up.

For the workers, a turning point came in the late 1970s. One of the first things President Ronald Reagan, a Republican, did was break the strike of the air traffic controllers in 1981. But the anti-labor offensive had actually begun under Jimmy Carter, a Democrat. By the mid-1980s, it was in full gallop. And it only intensified over the next quarter century.

Today, the working class in the U.S. finds itself in the greatest peril since the 1930s. The reason is high, persistent, long-term unemployment for tens of millions. When there are 10 or 20 workers available for every job opening, the bosses have the upper hand and can get away with murder.

But why is unemployment so high? This is where an understanding of how capitalism works is so essential, so that we know what it is we are fighting and how to overcome it.

This article cannot answer this question in all the detail it merits. But it can point the reader toward some remarkable books that explain why, just when productivity has reached such great heights, wages have dropped and unemployment has become endemic.

### Two books that illuminate the present crisis

The first book is called "High Tech, Low Pay," and it was written in 1986 by Sam Marcy, a Marxist thinker and organizer of

many workers. It not only unravels this seemingly irrational development — that great improvements in technology would lead to lower pay for the majority of workers — but it also showed the flip side of this problem: that the hardships caused would lead to a great working-class awakening, like what is happening in Wisconsin even now.

The full name of the book is "High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class." Even 25 years ago, Marcy was able to show how big changes in the composition of the working class, changes that were beginning to override the conservatism of the preceding period, would eventually lead to an upsurge of struggle.

In place of a majority of relatively well-off, white, male workers, whose salary could provide for a whole family, the working class had expanded to include many more women and people of color from oppressed backgrounds. The conservatism of many union leaders had left these workers largely out in the cold, unorganized and having to accept lower wages and much worse conditions than

what had prevailed.

It is these very workers who in recent decades have been the most militant and determined either to get into existing unions or organize new ones — from farmworkers in Florida to catfish workers in Mississippi and home health aides in California.

A more recent book, "Low-Wage Capitalism" by Fred Goldstein, published in 2008, brings up to date Marcy's analysis. It shows how capitalism's expansion on a world scale has further undermined the position of workers in the U.S. by creating a global labor market.

Both books explain that this trend is the product of the high-tech revolution, which has transformed the way work is done.

Goldstein's book also has a subtitle: "What the new globalized, high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S." Like Marcy, he discovers in these trends not only increased misery but also the revival of a fighting spirit among the workers — like what we are seeing unfold today.

Marxism is not a crystal ball. Rather, it is a scientific view of class and social rela-

tions based on hard, stubborn, material facts. The scientific-technological revolution of the last four decades cannot be reversed, for it vastly increases the productivity of human labor. But in the hands of private owners — which is what capitalism is all about — this greater productivity leads to the ruination of the mass of workers, instead of a lighter workload and a better life.

The workers' struggle has, ultimately, to take on the "right" of capitalists to own and control the great wealth created by labor. Both the strikes in Egypt, where workers have taken over banks and factories demanding justice, and the occupation of the Capitol building in Madison, Wis., by thousands of workers and youth show that we are entering a new period in which workers are refusing to play by the old rules, knowing that to do so would ultimately lead to their ruination.

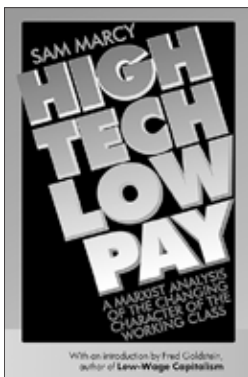
"*High Tech, Low Pay*," recently re-issued in a new edition, and "*Low-Wage Capitalism*" are both available in paperback from [leftbooks.com](http://leftbooks.com), as well as [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com).

E-mail: [dgriswold@workers.org](mailto:dgriswold@workers.org)

## HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

**A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class**

More than twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.



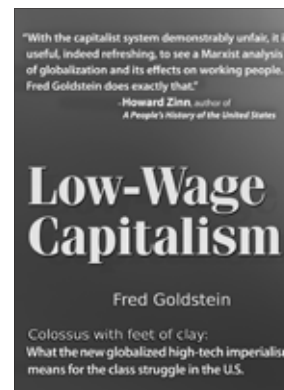
## Low-Wage Capitalism

**What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.**

An easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

Paperback, 336 pages. Includes graphs, charts, bibliography, endnotes and index.

The author is available for lectures and interviews. [www.LowWageCapitalism.com](http://www.LowWageCapitalism.com)



Available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com) and bookstores across the country.



# Djibouti masses protest U.S./French-backed regime

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Anti-government demonstrations have spread to the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti, where 30,000 people marched on Feb. 18 demanding the resignation of President Ismael Omar Guelleh. Two people were killed when police attacked protesters in this country’s capital, which is also called Djibouti.

The government detained and released three opposition leaders: National Democratic Party Chairman Aden Robleh, Djibouti Democratic Party Chairman Mohamed Daoud Chehem and Ismail Guedi Hared, whose Union for Democratic Change organized the massive demonstrations.

The former French colony, which still maintains close ties to Paris, has a population of less than 850,000, but serves as a strategic outpost in Western imperialism’s so-called “war on terrorism.”

Djibouti houses the only known U.S. military base on the African continent and is therefore highly significant to the Pentagon’s strategy aimed at dominating the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Peninsula. The Financial Times reported that Washington’s camp is an outpost for the U.S. Africa Command, Africom. (Feb. 20)

Hared told the Financial Times that demonstrations have taken place in seven towns and that the opposition forces have formed an alliance to push for the removal of the existing regime. He said more demonstrations are planned despite government repression.

He said, “The people are protesting against dictatorship, bad governance, lack of democracy and dynastic succession.



The opposition has formed a coalition, and we have decided to do everything to make sure the protests continue.”

State television reports showed thousands of people fighting the security forces, which utilized tear gas in an effort to break up the anti-government demonstrations. Images were shown of burnt vehicles and police welding batons against unarmed protesters.

The Guelleh regime changed the country’s constitution last year to extend the number of times that the president — who has been in power since 1999 — could run for office. A government ministry has accused opposition forces of wanting to seize power by force.

An opposition supporter from Balbala said, “The people don’t want this dictatorial regime. Our freedom is in our hands.

We won’t stop until our dreams come true.” (Reuters, Feb. 20)

Authorities have detained Jean-Paul Noël Abdi, president of the Djibouti League for Human Rights. In his mid-60’s, he was investigating and reporting on student demonstrations calling for educational policy changes.

The U.S.-based Human Rights Watch’s letter to President Guelleh said, “Noël Abdi did not organize the protests, nor did he take part in the demonstrations. He did not condone any disorderly behavior or looting or stone throwing.”

### U.S. base in the Horn of Africa

Since 2001, the Pentagon has aimed to establish a permanent military base in the Horn of Africa. After the September 11 attacks in Washington and New York, the

U.S. Marines relocated the USS Whitney warship off Djibouti’s coast in the Gulf of Aden and eventually moved into the French-built Camp Lemonnier.

The camp is a U.S. naval expeditionary base located at the Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport. It is the home of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa of Africom. Navy Admiral Brian L. Losey is base commander.

Djibouti is bordered by Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, making it a valuable asset for U.S. imperialism in its efforts to dominate the Horn of Africa region as well as the Arabian Peninsula.

### U.S. imperialism faces increasing instability

The demonstrations in Djibouti could pose a grave threat to Washington’s overall strategy of dominance in the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Peninsula. Although it is not clear in which direction these demonstrations will lead, if they result in the collapse of the existing regime, it could raise the specter of a new government demanding the removal of the U.S. naval base at Camp Lemonnier, Africom’s only known base on the continent.

The recent wave of popular uprisings throughout North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula is taking place amid an escalation of military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These Pentagon-directed campaigns have been overshadowed by the corporate media’s focus on the mass demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, Algeria and other states.

U.S. and NATO attacks on civilian areas in Afghanistan resulting in massive deaths have fueled opposition and resistance to the ongoing occupation. Protests in southern Iraq are aimed at the U.S.-installed puppet regime over its poor delivery of services to the population.

With the U.S. being forced to respond to so many outbreaks of political unrest in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, Washington is re-evaluating its foreign policy in these geopolitical regions. Pentagon Joint Chiefs of Staff head, Admiral Mike Mullen, is touring countries including Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

U.S. anti-war and anti-imperialist forces must follow these developments closely and adopt political programs and slogans that express solidarity with the progressive character of the demonstrations, rebellions and uprisings sweeping these areas of the world. □

# Yemen’s people demand ouster of ruler

By LeiLani Dowell

Protests continued throughout the country of Yemen on Feb. 21 to demand the ouster of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The demonstrations, which began during the time of the uprising in Tunisia and gained traction with recent events in Egypt, have increased in scope and intensity in the past 12 days.

Since Feb. 20, thousands of people have set up tents and occupied the two city blocks in front of Sana’a University, saying that they will not leave until Saleh leaves office. The Toronto Star described the scene: “In the early afternoon, 500 demonstrators danced, sang and shouted speeches. A line of self-appointed young guards, flanked by a row of motorcycles, blocked the streets leading to the group, and those wanting to enter were hastily searched for weapons.” (Feb. 21) Demonstrators at the university have renamed the area “Tahrir Square,” in homage to the focal point of protests in Egypt that brought down Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

The Feb. 21 Guardian (Britain) reports that thousands of people also held sit-ins in the cities of Ibb and Taiz. In the port city of Aden, demonstrators torched a local government building. The Yemen Post reports that banks and other large businesses have closed in response to the spreading protests. (Feb. 20)

Like the former president of Egypt,

Saleh has been in power in Yemen for more than 30 years, since 1978. Protesters have rejected Saleh’s announcement, made at the beginning of the protests, that he would not seek re-election in the 2013 elections

— a strategy that was also attempted by Mubarak. In Yemen, the people are particularly loath to believe Saleh’s statement, since he made similar pledges before the elections there in 1999 and 2006.

As in Egypt, protesters in Yemen have hit the streets in the face of massive unemployment, poverty and repression. The Washington Post notes that the daily protests have been “fueled largely by students and human rights activists but increasingly attracting lawyers, union workers and ordinary laborers.” (Feb. 17)

Twelve people have been killed, including a teenager who was shot by soldiers after he and other youth threw stones at a patrol on Feb. 21. Four others were injured in the incident. Yemen analyst Jane Novak reported that medics who attempted to revive the wounded were shot at by police. In the city of Taiz, two people were killed Feb. 18 after a hand grenade was thrown into a crowd of protesters. (Press TV, Feb. 20) Anti-Saleh protesters have also clashed with administration loyalists,



Yemen, Feb. 21

who chased them in front of the university with batons and daggers.

Washington provides millions in military and other aid to the Saleh administration, which has been a partner to the U.S. in the so-called “war on terror.” Both U.S. special operations forces and the CIA operate in the region under the guise of fighting the group, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, which is allegedly located in an oil-rich area of the south. The U.S. has bombed the region as part of that war.

The country has a long history of struggle. After ousting British colonialists in 1967, Yemenis in the south of the country set up the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen, which sought to build a socialist state and aligned itself with the Soviet Union, China and Cuba. After the south reunited with the north in 1990, following the collapse of the socialist camp, the country was destabilized by the expulsion of a half million Yemenis from neighboring Saudi Arabia in retaliation for Yemen’s refusal to back the U.S.-led war on Iraq. □



# Iraq protests target occupation, puppet regime

By John Catalinotto

As popular revolts spread across the Arab world, now breaking out in Morocco and Algeria, Jordan, Yemen and Bahrain, even in Kuwait, it is important to remember one of the nations in this region that faces a special situation: It is forcibly occupied by 50,000 U.S. troops. It is Iraq, which the U.S. and Britain invaded in March 2003 and which the U.S. has occupied since. No one should forget, when considering the crimes of the U.S.-backed tyrants, that U.S. imperialism is responsible for the deaths of a million Iraqis and the displacement of 4 million. According to people who have been in sympathy with the Iraqi resistance

against the illegal U.S.-British invasion and occupation, and the puppet government led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, there have been recent demonstrations in Basra, Kut, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Ramadi, Sulaimaniya and dozens of other locations. In addition, anti-occupation forces inside Iraq have called for nationwide demonstrations on Feb. 25, which they call a “Day of Peaceful Anger.” These protests didn’t get the media attention given to the massive upheaval in Egypt. However, there have been significant protests and uprisings in cities all over Iraq. Demonstrations hit Basra, Iraq’s second largest city, in the south, on Feb. 18, and in Sulaimaniya, in the Kurdish area in the north, where 3,000 dem-

onstrated on Feb. 17. At least two people were killed. One of the demonstrators, Qais Jabar, a university-educated Iraqi working as a cab driver, said, “We live in miserable conditions, without electricity, in dirty streets filled with mud. We have to make changes. We cannot stay silent.” (elnuevoherald.com, Feb. 18) In Kut, some 2,000 people demonstrated in front of the offices of the provincial governor. Three of the governmental buildings were set afire. There the protesters complained about corruption, unemployment, lack of electricity and health care, and the high price of necessities. Three people were killed, 30 wounded, and finally the army took control of

the city, which lies between Basra and Baghdad. Reports are that the shots that killed people came from private security forces. (Junge Welt, Feb. 21) While economic deprivation has fueled the popular support for the protests, they are definitely directed against the puppet regime and the occupation. Sympathizers with the Iraqi resistance movements have issued a call to organizations all over the world to sign a petition to support the Feb. 25 mobilization. Organizations are urged to reach out to the media of all types to try to get coverage and media presence in Iraq, especially in Baghdad, on Feb. 25. For more information on this, see [www.brussellstribunal.org](http://www.brussellstribunal.org) and look for “Support Iraqi Protests.” □

## BAHRAIN

# Protesters score victory against U.S.-backed kingdom

By Gene Clancy

Anti-government protesters in Bahrain swarmed back into a symbolic square on Feb. 19, putting riot police to flight in a striking victory for their cause. Crowds approached Pearl Square in Manama from different directions, creating a standoff with riot police who had moved in earlier to replace troops withdrawn on royal orders. Suddenly police raced to their buses and drove away, rolling over curbs in their haste to get away. The protesters, cheering and waving national flags, ran to the center of the traffic circle, reoccupying it even before all the police had left. The crowd waved fleeing policemen through. “We don’t fear death any more, let the army come and kill us to show the world what kind of brutes they are,” said Umm Mohammed, a teacher wearing a black cloak. (Reuters, Feb. 19) “I am happy we are back; I told you we would be back,” 23-year-old Ibrahim told a Reuters reporter in the square from which protesters were driven in a deadly police raid on Feb. 17 and the army occupied with threats of strict measures to enforce security. “To consider dialogue, the government must resign and the army should withdraw from the streets,” added parliamentary leader Abdel Jalil Khalil Ibrahim. The crowds in Pearl Square soon swelled into the tens of thousands, celebrating a triumph for the protesters who had taken to the streets on Feb. 14, inspired by popular revolts that toppled leaders in Egypt and Tunisia. Meanwhile, Bahrain’s main labor union had called an indefinite strike beginning Sunday, Feb. 20 to protest police violence and demand the right to demonstrate peacefully.

“The general union calls upon the workers of Bahrain to a general strike starting Sunday, unless the army is pulled out from the streets and peaceful demonstrations are permitted without any attacks from security forces,” it said. (Sky-News.com) Seven people have died so far, according to the opposition and families. The U.S. supplies the weapons and ammunition to the Bahraini Army. The union rescinded its call after the army withdrew and demonstrations were allowed to continue without the police. A call was issued for a mass demonstration on Feb. 22. The authorities had been determined to prevent protesters from turning Pearl Square into a base like Cairo’s Tahrir Square, the heart of a revolt that ousted Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak. On Feb. 17, unarmed people, including women and children, were clubbed, gassed and shot at close range with live ammunition, leaving the streets littered with the bodies of the dead and wounded and overwhelming nearby hospitals.

monarchy, has tried to use these differences as a justification for its murderous crackdown. But while there is rampant discrimination against the Shia majority by the Sunni al-Khalifa family, which has ruled since 1782, other forces are at work. In 2004 the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, quoting official statistics, stated that over half of Bahraini citizens are suffering from poverty and poor living standards. Most of the wealth flowing into the country goes to 5,200 individuals whose average wealth is \$4.2 million. Sixty percent of the workers are low-wage foreign workers who are not citizens. There is no minimum wage. (2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, U.S. Dept. of State) Beginning in 2007, and continuing through the world economic crisis to the



Manama, Bahrain Feb. 20.

present, the Bahraini government has carried on a systematic campaign of arbitrary arrests, torture, discrimination and repression. Through it all the U.S. maintained a public posture of praising the “progressive” nature of the Bahraini regime — until the U.S. was exposed by the current uprising. The Bahraini revolution, like others in the Middle East and around the world, needs and deserves solidarity. □

# Britian used torture in Kenya & Bahrain

By Stephen Millies

British Colonel Ian Henderson spent 30 years as head of Bahrain’s secret police until he was forced to retire in February 1998. George Galloway told the House of Commons on June 3, 1997: “Henderson is known as the butcher of Bahrain. He is the head of the security services and director of intelligence and has gathered around him the kind of British dogs of war, mercenaries, whose guns and electric shock equipment are for hire to anyone who will pay the price.” “His men allegedly detained and tortured thousands of anti-government activists,” wrote Tony Thompson in the June 30, 2002, London Observer. “Their activities are said to have included the ransack-

ing of villages, sadistic sexual abuse and using power drills to maim prisoners. On many occasions they are said to have detained children without informing their parents, only to return them months later in body bags.” Henderson got his start in the British Empire’s war against Kenya’s Land and Freedom Army, also known as the “Mau Mau.” He hunted down and captured the last of the Mau Mau leaders — Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi — on Oct. 21, 1956. The freedom fighter was hanged on Feb. 18, 1957, in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison outside Nairobi. To this day the British Government refuses to reveal where Field Marshal Kimathi is buried. During the war a million Kenyans were thrown into concentration camps. U.S. “foreign aid” helped pay for Embakasi Airport, which was built by prisoners with their bare hands. No wonder Henderson was “known as the torturer-in-chief.” (Nairobi Daily Nation, April 15, 2004) Queen Elizabeth II knighted Henderson-the-torturer and made him a “Commander of the British Empire” in 1986. Why isn’t this war criminal prosecuted? People in Bahrain are fighting for freedom. They’re also avenging the Mau Mau.

## HAITI: A Slave Revolution 200 Years after 1804

UPDATED 2010: Includes the coup against President Aristide & the January 2010 earthquake. Authors include: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ramsey Clark, Pat Chin, Edwidge Danticat, Frederick Douglass, Greg Dunkel, Ben Dupuy, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Paul Laraque, Maud LeBlanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morrisseau-Leroy, Johnnie Stevens, Abayomi Azikiwe, Larry Hales, Monica Moorehead, Saeed Shabazz.



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# Libya and imperialism

Of all the struggles going on in North Africa and the Middle East right now, the most difficult to unravel is the one in Libya.

What is the character of the opposition to the Gadhafi regime, which reportedly now controls the eastern city of Benghazi?

Is it just coincidence that the rebellion started in Benghazi, which is north of Libya's richest oil fields as well as close to most of its oil and gas pipelines, refineries and its LNG port? Is there a plan to partition the country?

What is the risk of imperialist military intervention, which poses the gravest danger for the people of the entire region?

Libya is not like Egypt. Its leader, Moammar al-Gadhafi, has not been an imperialist puppet like Hosni Mubarak. For many years, Gadhafi was allied to countries and movements fighting imperialism. On taking power in 1969 through a military coup, he nationalized Libya's oil and used much of that money to develop the Libyan economy. Conditions of life improved dramatically for the people.

For that, the imperialists were determined to grind Libya down. The U.S. actually launched air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986 that killed 60 people, including Gadhafi's infant daughter - which is rarely mentioned by the corporate media. Devastating sanctions were imposed by both the U.S. and the U.N. to wreck the Libyan economy.

After the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003 and leveled much of Baghdad with a bombing campaign that the Pentagon exultantly called "shock and awe," Gadhafi tried to ward off further threatened aggression on Libya by making big political and economic concessions to the imperialists. He opened the economy to foreign banks and corporations; he agreed to IMF demands for "structural adjustment," privatizing many state-owned enterprises and cutting state subsidies on necessities like food and fuel.

The Libyan people are suffering from the same high prices and unemployment that underlie the rebellions elsewhere and that flow from the worldwide capitalist economic crisis.

There can be no doubt that the struggle sweeping the Arab world for political freedom and economic justice has also struck a chord in Libya. There can be no doubt that discontent with the Gadhafi regime is motivating a significant section of the population.

However, it is important for progressives to know that many of the people being promoted in the West as leaders of the opposition are long-time agents of imperialism. The BBC on Feb. 22 showed footage of crowds in Benghazi pulling down the green flag of the

republic and replacing it with the flag of the overthrown monarch King Idris - who had been a puppet of U.S. and British imperialism.

The Western media are basing a great deal of their reporting on supposed facts provided by the exile group National Front for the Salvation of Libya, which was trained and financed by the U.S. CIA. Google the front's name plus CIA and you will find hundreds of references.

The Wall Street Journal in a Feb. 23 editorial wrote that "The U.S. and Europe should help Libyans overthrow the Gadhafi regime." There is no talk in the board rooms or the corridors of Washington about intervening to help the people of Kuwait or Saudi Arabia or Bahrain overthrow their dictatorial rulers. Even with all the lip service being paid to the mass struggles rocking the region right now, that would be unthinkable. As for Egypt and Tunisia, the imperialists are pulling every string they can to get the masses off the streets.

There was no talk of U.S. intervention to help the Palestinian people of Gaza when thousands died from being blockaded, bombed and invaded by Israel. Just the opposite. The U.S. intervened to prevent condemnation of the Zionist settler state.

Imperialism's interest in Libya is not hard to find. Bloomberg.com wrote on Feb. 22 that while Libya is Africa's third-largest producer of oil, it has the continent's largest proven reserves - 44.3 billion barrels. It is a country with a relatively small population but the potential to produce huge profits for the giant oil companies. That's how the super-rich look at it, and that's what underlies their professed concern for the people's democratic rights in Libya.

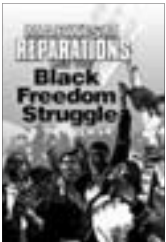
Getting concessions out of Gadhafi is not enough for the imperialist oil barons. They want a government that they can own outright, lock, stock and barrel. They have never forgiven Gadhafi for overthrowing the monarchy and nationalizing the oil. Fidel Castro of Cuba in his column "Reflections" takes note of imperialism's hunger for oil and warns that the U.S. is laying the basis for military intervention in Libya.

In the U.S., some forces are trying to mobilize a street-level campaign promoting such U.S. intervention. We should oppose this outright and remind any well-intentioned people of the millions killed and displaced by U.S. intervention in Iraq.

Progressive people are in sympathy with what they see as a popular movement in Libya. We can help such a movement most by supporting its just demands while rejecting imperialist intervention, in whatever form it may take. It is the people of Libya who must decide their future. □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes • **Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes • **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy • **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell • **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead • **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladdin Muhammad • **Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee • **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal • **Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker • **Racism and Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales • **Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin



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# Egyptian military in historical perspective

By Fred Goldstein

A great deal has been written about the role of the Egyptian military with regard to the momentous mass struggle to topple the U.S.-backed president, Hosni Mubarak. During the 18 days after Jan. 25, the big question was, would the high command defend Mubarak? If so, would they then order the soldiers to attack the masses?

The people formulated a classic strategy of fraternizing with the soldiers and lower officers on the scene at Liberation Square. They called it "hug a soldier." Numerous photos appeared of soldiers being embraced by demonstrators, of soldiers showing solidarity with the crowds and waving Egyptian flags in solidarity from the turrets of their tanks.

In the end the troops never fired on the people. In all likelihood, they were never given that order. And had they been given the order, it was not known whether the soldiers would have carried it out.

In any case, they did not. The slogan, "The army and the people are one," was repeated over and over during the struggle. Now that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has assumed power in the country, the question of what slogan the revolution should adopt in order to influence the army is of decisive importance.

**Military is a reflection of class society**

The military in any society is a reflection of its class structure. In today's Egypt there is a high command that is allied with civilian big business and has grown rich by building business empires. This high command also looks after the military and business interests of its imperialist masters in the U.S. There are lower officers of middle-class origin, and then there is the mass of the soldiers, who have been conscripted and are composed primarily of workers and peasants.

Thus, the structure of the military reflects a society based not only upon internal class antagonisms between the exploited and the exploiters, but between imperialism and the oppressed masses of Egypt.

Under such conditions, a slogan that is more reflective of class reality inside the military would be: "The soldiers and the people are one."

**Egyptian military overthrew feudalism and colonialism**

The Egyptian military as an institution has historically had a great deal of prestige among the anti-colonial Egyptian population. The slogan "The army and the people are one" represents a carry-over of that prestige from a previous era, when the Egyptian military was allied with the anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist forces of the world and also with the socialist camp.

During that period the military stood as a bulwark in the struggle against aggression by the Israeli Zionist settler state and against the imperialist domination of Egypt. The military and the military government were led by rebellious middle-class officers who in July 1952 overthrew the high command, which had been in the service of British imperialism. The objective of the Free Officers, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, was to rid the country of colonial domination and launch national development to overcome poverty and economic underdevelopment.

## The USSR and Egyptian military

Soon after the Egyptian revolution of 1952, the Soviet Union and the socialist camp came to the aid of Egypt at crucial moments. This aid from the socialist camp

evoked hostility from the imperialist camp headed by Washington.

After the overthrow of the feudal monarchy of King Farouk, a British puppet, by the Free Officers, pressure began to build to expel the British occupation forces. Israel then began menacing the Egyptian revolution. In 1955 the socialist Czechoslovakian People's Republic sent arms to Egypt.

The imperialists countered that same year by forming a military alliance called the Baghdad Pact. It consisted of Britain, Iran under the Shah, Iraq under feudal monarch King Faisal, Turkey — a staunch member of NATO at that time — and Pakistan, which was under a pro-Western puppet military regime. This was all done at the instigation of the Eisenhower administration in the U.S. and was aimed at both the USSR and the socialist camp. Egypt was expected to join. When Nasser and the Egyptian military refused, the alliance, officially called CENTO for Central Treaty Organization, turned against the Egyptian revolution.

Having kicked out the colonialists, Egypt needed to modernize by building a high dam at Aswan in order to regulate the water of the Nile River, control flooding and generate electricity. U.S. imperialism got the funding for the construction blocked, as retaliation for Egypt's relations with the USSR. President Nasser then seized the British-run Suez Canal and declared his intention to use the revenue to build the Aswan Dam.

The Suez Canal, one of the most strategic waterways in the world, had been built in 10 years using Egyptian forced labor. Thousands of Egyptian workers died before it opened in 1869. While it was built by a French company, the British seized control of it in 1888. British troops guarded it — and the revenues from it — until 1956.

In retaliation for the nationalization of the canal, Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt. The U.S. did not support the invasion, for tactical reasons of its own, and the USSR threatened London and Paris with rockets. All three invading countries pulled back.

The USSR helped the Egyptian army rebuild its military forces after the invasion. During the 1960s the Soviet Union supplied the Egyptian military with advanced MiG-21 fighter planes, SA-2 SAM surface-to-air missiles, T-54 tanks and other military equipment. The USSR and the German Democratic Republic supplied military technicians and trainers.

The USSR opened its military schools to provide training to an entire generation of military officers, including Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. By the 1970s, 20,000 military advisers from the USSR and other socialist countries were in Egypt.

Soviet equipment was used in the June War of 1967, when the Israelis launched their sneak attack and occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula. Soviet military equipment was used during the 1973 October war, when the Egyptian military inflicted the greatest losses on the Israeli government. Israel was only saved from defeat by the massive intervention of a U.S. airlift of supplies.

**Soviet economic aid to Egypt**

The alignment of Egypt with the USSR was not only military. The USSR funded the building of the Aswan High Dam. It gave long-term credits to Egypt for a number of projects, including construction of the Hulsan Iron and Steel Works, agricultural machinery, irrigation technology and technical support for the development of desert lands.

It helped in the electrification of the



countryside and the development of phosphorus production and phosphorus-based fertilizers, as well as aluminum production. In 1971 the two countries signed a long-term Treaty of Friendship.

Egypt’s policy under the military leadership headed by Nasser was aligned with the anti-colonial camp. Nasser was at the historic Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955, along with other anti-colonialist leaders such as Sukarno of Indonesia, Zhou Enlai of the People’s Republic of China and Jawaharlal Nehru of India.

Nasser was a founder of the Organization of African Unity, along with Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and other African leaders.

Thus the progressive reputation of the Egyptian military was forged when it was aligned with the anti-imperialist camp and had strong military and economic relations with the socialist camp.

**Sadat changes camps, from anti-colonial to pro-imperialist**

But the Egyptian leadership under Anwar Sadat, who took over when Nasser died in 1970, shifted away from the anti-imperialist camp after the 1973 war. Under pressure of the U.S.-backed Israeli military, Sadat took Egypt into the imperialist camp. He expelled all Soviet advisers. In 1978 he broke ranks with the Palestinians and the Arab world and went to Israel for an official state visit. In 1979 he signed the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

From then on, the U.S. poured in billions of dollars in military aid. The Egyptian military was then retrained by the U.S. on F-4 and F-16 jet fighters, I-Hawk anti-aircraft missiles, C-130 transports, attack helicopters and M60 tanks, and it set up co-production of Abrams tanks. In 1984 some \$1.8 billion in annual aid was initiated on a grant basis by the Pentagon.

The early leaders of the Egyptian revolution, during the period of Nasser, nationalized much of the economy, most of which had previously been owned by British imperialism. They blended state capitalism with forms of economic planning implanted from the socialist camp and set up five-year plans and so forth.

Whereas nationalized industry under the military in the Nasser period was used for national development, this was converted under the Sadat regime, and later under Mubarak, into a method of private enrichment of the military aristocracy and their business cohorts, while giving protection to imperialist interests.

Whereas the generation of officers under Nasser overthrew the pro-British imperialist high command, the Sadat/Mubarak generation converted the military officers into a corrupt, pro-U.S. imperialist corps who have sold out the country and who rule over a 500,000-person army of workers and peasants in uniform.

The class contradictions inherent in this military structure will inevitably come to the fore and become a decisive question for the Egyptian revolution. □

# Imperialist exploitation at the heart of every grievance raised at Tahrir Square

## How Wall Street & the Pentagon underdeveloped Egypt PART 2

By Joyce Chediac

The Egyptian people were promised that aligning their country with the U.S. would raise their standard of living. The U.S. government started pouring money into Egypt after it signed the treaty with Israel in 1979 — at least \$40 billion in 30 years. Egypt became the second largest recipient of U.S. aid, right behind Israel. That money was not meant for the Egyptian people.

U.S. aid “goes to Egypt, then it comes back for F-16 aircraft, for M1 tanks, for aircraft engines, for all kinds of missiles, for guns, for tear gas canisters,” explained William Hartung, the author of “Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex.” (“Democracy Now!,” Jan. 31) U.S. corporate arms manufacturers make enormous profits from weapons sales for the Egyptian military.

“[T]his is a key element in propping up the regime,” stressed Hartung.

In fiscal 2009, the U.S. spent \$1.5 billion on aid to Egypt; 86 percent of it was military aid, reports the Congressional Research Services. Most of it went back to U.S. weapons manufacturers, which Hartung calls “a form of corporate welfare. ... [T]axpayers could just as easily be giving it directly to Lockheed Martin or General Dynamics.”

**IMF & World Bank underdevelop Egypt**

Economic gains were made for Egypt’s poorest in the 1950s and 1960s when former President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, some multinational corporations and all foreign banks.

Former President Hosni Mubarak did just the opposite. He sold off nationalized industries and invited the most predatory foreign banks to make “structural adjustments” to Egypt’s economy.

In 1991 Egypt agreed to International Monetary Fund and World Bank dictates to privatize the public sector. Afterwards, Egypt’s standard of living plunged.

Mubarak’s government accelerated neoliberal policies. It cut the top tax rate from 42 percent to 20 percent, so that multimillionaires paid the same proportion in taxes as workers earning under \$800, according to a 2009 Egyptian General Authority for Investment report. (Guardian, Nov. 8, 2009)

The regime privatized public factories and opened markets to exploitation by foreign companies by decreasing tariffs



Feb. 15 in Alexandria, Egypt.

and import taxes and by introducing subsidies for agribusiness in place of those for small farmers.

Special economic zones were created for foreign companies. Foreign investment increased dramatically — \$13 billion in 2008 — but it was in sectors like finance and gas, which create few new jobs. The public sector, where most Egyptians worked, was shrunk, with parts sold to Mubarak’s cronies at discount prices.

“These policies benefitted a small Egyptian elite and foreign corporations, while condemning the country’s working class to a new form of labour-slavery,” reported Al Jazeera on Feb 15. Private sector employees work 12-hour days and 6-day weeks for just \$120 to \$400 a month.

After the IMF’s dictates were imposed, Egyptians got poorer. “[W]hen structural adjustment began, 20 percent of the population were living on less than (inflation-adjusted) \$2 a day” and now it’s 44 percent, the Guardian article noted. Meanwhile, bread and cooking oil costs have spiraled.

Today a tiny rich clique lives in mansions, while many urban working-class neighborhoods don’t even have sewage systems. In Cairo a million people live in the main cemetery because they cannot afford housing, and 50,000 homeless children live on the streets.

Egypt’s educational system, once the pride of the Arab world, now ranks 106 out of 131 countries. There are no jobs for the college-educated middle class.

Today’s population is 2.5 times that of 1970, but no new land has been cultivated for food in 30 years. To feed its people, Egypt imports wheat, much of it from the U.S. To pressure Mubarak, Washington has held back wheat shipments, precipitating bread rebellions by hungry Egyptians.

**30 years of U.S. exploitation**

The Egyptian people took a fall when their government surrendered Egypt’s sovereignty and independence to the Pentagon and U.S. banks and companies.

After 30 years of exploitation, it took a revolution for a U.S. president to discover that Egyptians have rights. President Barack Obama’s praise for Tahrir Square’s

demonstrators attempted to paper over U.S. responsibility for their plight. It reflects Washington’s fear that they might sweep away U.S. dominance of the Middle East.

Vice President Joe Biden voiced the U.S. administration’s real position on Jan. 27, before it understood the revolt’s full power. He told PBS, “Mubarak has been an ally of ours in [many] things. [H]e’s been very responsible on, relative to geopolitical interest in the region, the Middle East

peace efforts; the actions Egypt has taken relative to normalizing relationship with Israel. ... I would not refer to [Mubarak] as a dictator.”

After Mubarak was deposed, the Feb. 13 New York Times explained Obama’s real position: that he supported keeping Mubarak in office and a long transition process. “But he apparently feared that saying so openly would reveal that the United States was not in total sync with the protesters, and was indeed putting its strategic interests first.”

The U.S. government always puts its strategic interests first. The U.S. president’s about-face will not get Washington off the hook. Egypt has been plundered by imperialism. Its relationship as a vassal of U.S. finance capital is at the heart of every grievance raised at Tahrir Square.

After 30 years of humiliation, corruption and poverty, taking to the streets has given the Egyptian people dignity and pride. They are determined to continue and deepen their fight for the release of political prisoners; for lifting the emergency laws; and for a living wage, social services, human rights and more social and economic reforms. Their expectations are high, and their revolution has just begun.

The line is drawn. The U.S. government, its imperialist allies in Europe, Israel and Washington’s corrupt Arab clients stand on one side. On the other are all the struggling peoples of the Middle East.

The predatory, imperialist U.S. has never accommodated to the independent existence or aspirations of any people, and it cannot accommodate to the Egyptian revolution. It will look for every way to derail it and impose a self-serving solution that counters social development. This is the old historic order.

The Egyptian people have taken back their rightful place in history. They now stand with pride with the Lebanese, who twice defeated Israel; the Palestinians, whose struggle never ceases to inspire and who hail the Egyptian Intifada; and the Tunisian people, whose protests showed them what they could do. They all represent the new historic order. Their revolutions will continue until the old order is swept away. □



## GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediac

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## ¿Se está forjando otro Egipto en México?

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

La gran mayoría de la cobertura sobre México en los medios estadounidenses de comunicación trata de la brutal violencia de las drogas. Esa violencia es real.

La lucha en ambos lados de la frontera por el botín de la enormemente lucrativa industria de la droga conlleva como resultado una terrible violencia. Más de 35.000 mexicanos/as han muerto en los últimos cuatro años como resultado de la narco industria.

Pero eso no es toda la historia.

Las noticias sobre la violencia del narco es una maniobra orquestada por las clases gobernantes de los EEUU y México para desviar la atención de la verdadera historia: una ampliación de la vibrante y diversa lucha de masas en México, que es tan profunda y dinámica, que lenta pero constantemente está desafiando el estatus quo en forma histórica sin precedentes.

El desempleo masivo, las condiciones sociales insoportables, la falta de los derechos democráticos burgueses y la represión brutal de las masas también están creando una situación insostenible para las clases dominantes de los EEUU y de México.

Tarde o temprano, las condiciones en México darán lugar a una sublevación como la de Egipto. Una vez más se hará historia trascendental en la frontera de EEUU. Más pronto que tarde, la marea



Zocalo

revolucionaria del cambio que está bariendo las Américas llegará a la frontera del imperialismo de EEUU. Incluso podría ser correcto decir que en un futuro no muy lejano existirá doble poder en México.

Los/as mexicanos/as se están organizando como nunca antes.

El 31 de enero por ejemplo, una gran manifestación de más de 200.000 personas tuvo lugar en el Zócalo de Ciudad de México, la plaza Tahrir de México. Se organizó en respuesta a los ataques contra los sindicatos y el aumento de los precios. Reunió una concentración de fuerzas de muchos sectores de la clase obrera, sindicatos, agricultores y movimientos progresistas. El evento fue convocado por una nueva coalición, el Movimiento Nacional por la Soberanía Alimentaria y Energética, los Derechos de los Trabajadores y las Libertades Democráticas, y es un ejemplo de la creciente unidad en el movimiento de los/as trabajadores/as.

Esta gran manifestación es tan solo uno de los miles de ejemplos de la creciente lucha en México.

Es importante que el movimiento progresista y de los/as trabajadores/as en EEUU y alrededor del mundo tomen nota de la lucha en México. Debemos estar listos/as para organizar una solidaridad masiva con el pueblo mexicano. Al igual que en Egipto, donde el imperialismo estadounidense desesperadamente depende de un gobierno títere para someter el Oriente Medio, en México Washington cuenta con un gobierno títere para promover sus intereses. La solidaridad mundial y la condena de la intervención de EEUU en México serán decisivas para que las masas mexicanas salgan victoriosas en su consecución del cambio.

Un acontecimiento revolucionario en las puertas del imperialismo de EEUU podría cambiar el curso de la historia de luchas de las clases sociales. Estados Unidos no se detendrá ante nada para impedirlo.

Es por ello que la industria de la droga es tan exitosa en México y el porqué la violencia del narcotráfico ha dado lugar a un increíble y arraigado clima de impunidad en ambos lados de la frontera.

### Detrás de la guerra contra las drogas

En 2006 incrementó la intervención de EEUU en México después de una tumultuosa elección presidencial. Para todos los efectos, el actual presidente Felipe

Calderón se robó la elección del candidato popular, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, comúnmente llamado AMLO por sus partidarios/as.

Millones de mexicanos/as se manifestaron no sólo una vez sino varias veces en la plaza del Zócalo y en las ciudades de todo el país para exigir el lugar que le corresponde a AMLO en Los Pinos, la Casa Blanca de México. Sin embargo, Felipe Calderón asumió el poder con el apoyo de los EEUU. La situación era tan tensa que el ejército mexicano tuvo que escoltar a Calderón hasta Los Pinos. Ni siquiera pudo dar un discurso público, tan precaria era su seguridad.

Para hacer frente a este período tumultuoso, Felipe Calderón y EEUU intensificaron la llamada “guerra contra las drogas”, no sólo para desviar la atención de la elección robada, sino para sofocar la resistencia.

Al igual que en Colombia, EEUU está luchando contra las drogas con las fuerzas especiales militares, los equipos de Operaciones Tácticas (SWAT) y con armas proporcionadas por el Pentágono. En lugar de abrir centros de rehabilitación de drogas o elevar los salarios, el imperialismo estadounidense militarizó aun más a México. Su objetivo es detener la resistencia a la dominación imperialista e infundir miedo y terror.

La muerte y la destrucción en el México de hoy es un subproducto directo de la guerra de EEUU contra las drogas y de la industria de las drogas. □

## Decenas de miles liberan al Capitolio estatal en Madison para oponerse a legislación anti-obrera

### Wisconsin AFL-CIO: ¡Todos por Madison el 18 de febrero!

Por Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Madison, Wisconsin

Febrero 16 — Desde el 14 de febrero, decenas de miles de estudiantes, trabajadores/as y otros/as miembros de la comunidad han liberado al Capitolio de Wisconsin en Madison, en respuesta al proyecto de ley “reparación del presupuesto” del gobernador Scott Walker que eliminaría los derechos de negociación colectiva de 175.000 trabajadores/as sindicalizados del sector público en todo el estado.

Gilbert Johnson, presidente de la Federación Americana de Empleados Estatales, del Condado y Municipales (AFSCME), Local 82, de la Universidad de Wisconsin-Milwaukee, dijo a este reportero: “Estamos asqueados por los esfuerzos de la administración actual para despojarnos de nuestros derechos y nuestra dignidad. El aumento de protestas en todo el estado, y en especial en el Capitolio estatal, son exactamente lo que se necesita para matar el proyecto de ley del gobernador Walker, que es un ataque contra los trabajadores y los sindicatos. La resistencia del pueblo de Wisconsin es inspiradora e inyecta esperanza en las personas pobres y trabajadoras de todo el país. Necesitamos un flujo constante de gente que vaya al Capitolio para detener este proyecto de ley y que todos vayamos a la manifestación de emergencia el jueves”.

Al tiempo en que se escriben estas líneas, el proyecto de ley de Walker está en el Comité de Finanzas mientras cientos de estudiantes y otras personas acampan durante la noche en el interior del Capitolio. Una maniobra popular obstruccionista de los procedimientos parlamentarios se llevó a cabo durante más de 20 horas del 15 al 16 de febrero. En una ocasión en la noche del 15 de febrero, cuando el Comité trató de cerrar los comentarios del público, cientos de manifestantes enojados liderados por los estudiantes coreaban “Vamos a hablar” y “Déjennos entrar”. Así ganaron más tiempo y los comentarios del público se prolongaron hasta las 2:30 a.m.

Si el Comité aprueba el proyecto de ley de Walker, irá al Senado donde se espera que sea aprobado, y luego a la Asamblea. El proyecto de ley podría presentarse ante el Senado mañana. Los/as manifestantes han prometido al Senado y la Asamblea que se enfrentarán con resistencia masiva de diversos tipos si intentan aprobar la ley.

Tanto ayer como hoy, cientos de autobuses llegaron a Madison desde todas partes del estado para los mítines del mediodía en el Capitolio. Las miles de personas que viajaron a Madison ocuparon el edificio del Capitolio los dos días, apoderándose de las cuatro plantas y rodearon el Capitolio con líneas de piquetes



MO/WW FOTO: BRYAN PFEIFER

y vigiliass. En el interior, miles de personas más presionaban a los legisladores, se unían a las protestas tocando tambores y cantando. La AFL-CIO de Wisconsin dice que 20.000 descendieron en el Capitolio el 15 de febrero y 50.000 hoy. El 17 de febrero los sindicatos y organizaciones estudiantiles esperan que lleguen aún más personas de todas partes de Wisconsin y otros lugares.

Hoy todos/as los/as maestros/as y estudiantes desde Kindergarten hasta el grado doce en Madison se unieron en solidaridad en el Capitolio. También ha habido “paros de enseñanza” en la Universidad de Wisconsin-Madison. Delegaciones de bomberos también se unieron a las protestas de ayer y de hoy en un acto notable de conmovedora solidaridad, ya

que están exentos de los terribles efectos de la propuesta de ley de Walker. Recibieron una electrizante respuesta de la multitud, al igual que los/as jóvenes y estudiantes, quienes están jugando un papel fundamental en numerosas áreas.

La semana comenzó con piquetes frente a las casas de los legisladores el 13 de febrero. Al día siguiente, hubo acciones simultáneas de protesta como la de la Asociación de Asistentes de Graduados de Milwaukee — Federación Americana de Profesores de la Universidad de Wisconsin-Milwaukee que auspició una concentración y la Asociación de Asistentes de Enseñanza-AFT de la Universidad de Wisconsin-Madison que organizó una manifestación en el recinto para luego marchar hasta el Capitolio.

### Apoyo surge de grupos sindicales y comunitarios

El martes, maestros/as sindicalizados/as y otras personas protestaron frente a la casa de Walker.

Las fuerzas principales en la protesta son jóvenes y estudiantes, AFSCME, el Consejo de la Asociación de Educación de Wisconsin, la AFL-CIO de Wisconsin y la Federación Americana de Maestros (AFT) de Wisconsin. Una impresionante

*Continúa a pagina 4*